



COVID-19 Technical Assistance for Schools

June 24, 2021

Webinar housekeeping

- All participants will be muted throughout the webinar
- Please type questions into the chat box for the Q & A portion of the webinar
 - Questions should be directed to “everyone” in the chat
- The webinar will be recorded and available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/school-resources>

Webinar Agenda

- Guidance Updates
- K-12 COVID-19 Screening Testing Program
- Q and A

Next webinar will be held on **July 22nd at 1:00 pm**

Face Coverings

- Governor's Executive Order No. 21-06-15-01 rescinds requirements for face coverings in schools and on school buses as July 1, 2021
- At that time, MDH guidance for face coverings will be as follows:
 - MDH strongly recommends, but does not require, that all unvaccinated individuals continue to wear face coverings in all indoor settings outside of their home and in outdoor settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained

Face Coverings (cont'd)

- On January 29, 2021, CDC issued an [Order](#) that requires face masks to be worn by all people while on public transportation conveyances (which includes all passengers and all personnel operating conveyances) traveling within the United States. **This includes school buses.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>

Other School Guidance

- MDH Order No. 2021-06-15-01
 - All other COVID-19 MDH Directives and Orders, Provider Bulletins, Guidance Documents, or correspondence related to COVID-19, including for the...Public Health Services, shall cease to be effective and are terminated as of 11:59 P.M. on August 15, 2021, or unless otherwise specifically extended.
- MDH is assessing what school guidance will be extended for the 2021-22 school year (including needed updates).



K-12 COVID-19 Screening Program

June 24, 2021

Information will be updated as
program develops.

K-12 COVID-19 Fall Testing Program Overview

- MDH, in partnership with MSDE, will be offering K-12 COVID-19 screening programs for the 2021-2022 school year to participating schools
- Program is open to all K-12 public and non-public schools in Maryland
- State-contracted vendors will directly provide full-service testing support to schools
- Schools should determine the most appropriate testing strategy based on factors such as school context and anticipated level of community transmission over time

K-12 COVID-19 Diagnostic Program Update

Schools may continue or join the **COVID-19 diagnostic testing program**, with the following changes from the current program:

- The program will no longer require a confirmatory PCR after a negative rapid antigen test in symptomatic individuals
- Schools may continue to conduct the confirmatory PCR at their own discretion, based on their current environment and overall assessment of risk

K-12 COVID-19 Screening Program - Vendor Update

- Two main vendor functional areas:
 - Non-pooled vendors
 - Vendor will provide individual PCR and/or rapid antigen testing
 - Pooled vendors
 - Vendor will provide pooled PCR and/or rapid antigen testing of cohorts up to 25 individuals
 - Follow-up testing will be provided in the event of a positive pool
- Up to 5 vendors will be selected per functional area

K-12 COVID-19 Screening Program - Timeline

Date	Activity
June 24th	Webinar #2, start of school planning
July 16th	Testing vendor selection finalized
July 19-23	Vendor onboarding
July 26-30	Vendor fair and school selection process
August 2-13	School selection and vendor assessments
August 9-School year start	Finalize testing plans and plan for fall testing for those who would like to begin testing at the start of the school year
School Year Start +	Initiate and operate testing programs, continue onboarding schools as needed

Key Items to Note

- This process will vary depending on school/school system
- We will work to accommodate each school's specific testing needs as much as possible within the screening testing program
- Schools do not need to commit immediately or start testing by the first week of school
 - Schools may develop plans that can be used for the future
 - Schools may develop more than one plan to be used as a backup
- Schools are recommended to begin defining their testing strategy *prior* to the vendor fair

What You Can Do Now - Planning Your Testing Program

Decide the type of testing program

- Screening (individual, pooled testing) or diagnostic (as needed) - or combination of both?

Begin identifying your testing team

- Who will be involved in testing your school?
- Will you need additional staffing resources to provide administrative support?

Develop your testing strategy

- Who will get tested? (staff, teachers, students, voluntary vs. required)
- How often will you test?
- What type of specimen collection will work best for your school's context?
 - Pooled vs non-pooled
 - Clinical staff administering test vs self-swab
- Where will testing occur?
- When will testing take place?
 - Before school
 - During lunch
 - Before bus pickup at end of day
 - Combination of times

What You Can Do Now - Resources Available

- CDC's [K–12 Schools COVID-19 Prevention Toolkit](#) includes resources, tools, and checklists to help school administrators and school officials prepare schools to open for in-person instruction and to manage ongoing operations
- [Openandsafeschools.org](#) is a toolkit is designed to support state public health leaders and school leaders in leveraging federal government programs and resources to implement school COVID-19 testing programs as a part of their school reopening strategies
- [WhentoTest.org](#) is a modeling tool that demonstrates how using masks, implementing contact tracing, limiting unmasked group activities, and testing can minimize the spread of COVID-19
- The Rockefeller Foundation has compiled a list of resources to assist in these efforts, which can be found [here](#)

What You Can Do Now - Communicating Your Testing Program

Engaging your parent, student, and staff population to generate buy-in and participation

- Clear communications, delivered by trusted leaders in the community, are needed to build community members' understanding of the program and encourage participation
- Host a town hall or webinar to inform your community of school-based COVID-19 testing (MDH is prepared to join as needed)

Develop/adapt communications materials for school testing (consent forms, positive result communications)

- MDH can assist in providing templates and suggestions for messaging/social media
- Testing vendors will also be able to provide communications materials for adaptation
- Ensure any communication about the program is accessible and available in multiple languages
- Disseminate a short video showing how the test is performed and widely distribute a FAQ

Sharing Testing Experiences

- James Dendinger, Interim Director of COVID-19 Testing, Baltimore City Public Schools
 - Elementary School - PCR Pooled Testing
 - Middle/High School - Individual PCR testing
- Jason Stoddard, Director of School Safety and Security, Charles County Public Schools
 - Individual PCR testing



City Schools' COVID-19 Testing Program

June 24, 2021

City Schools is serving as a nation-wide leader

“Baltimore City Public Schools serves as a model for how other school districts in the Washington-Baltimore corridor can leverage the Consortium testing program to safely reopen America’s schools.”

- Dr. Rajiv J. Shah, President of the Rockefeller Foundation

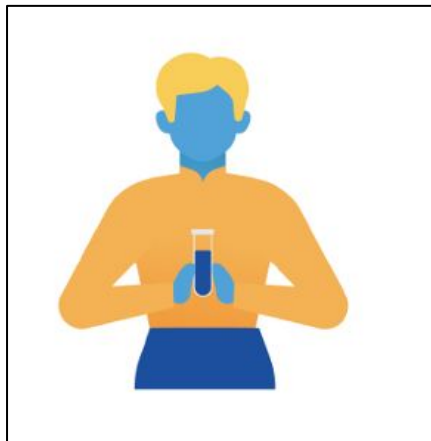


City Schools No-Symptom Testing Program

- Students and staff were tested weekly regardless of whether they had symptoms. Going forward, testing cadence over time will be determined by community conditions
- All tests are PCR tests – the gold standard for COVID-19 testing

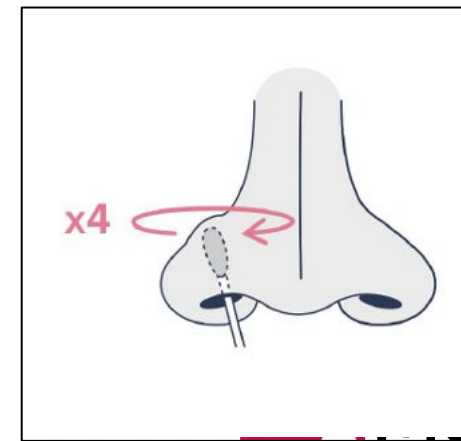
High-School Students and Staff:

Saliva-based PCR Testing



Elementary Students and Staff:

Pooled Nasal PCR testing



Pooled Testing Sample Collection



Step 1: Place the tube in a coffee cup on a desk at the front of the room

Step 2: Everyone in class receives a sealed nasal swab. Students self-administer the swab under the supervision of the Health and Safety Coordinator / Teacher

Step 3: One by one, students place their swab in the tube. The Tube is capped and sterilized with an alcohol wipe

Step 4: The Health and Safety Coordinator registers the tube and ships it

The University of Maryland COVID-19 Mobile Testing Team

- This partnership created mobile testing units (vans) that could be deployed to schools to respond to **positive pools**
- Schools booked appointments to have their students receive individual follow-up tests to determine who in the pool had COVID-19
- Follow up testing will be performed on-site by our nursing suite staff next school year



Saliva-Based PCR Testing For High Schools



1

Participant arrives at collection site



2

Participant selects an empty tube



3

Participant salivates into the tube



4

Collection site staff scan participant's ID and vial linking the vial to the participant



5

Participant places tube in a bag then into a collection bin and departs

RESULTS

Elementary Schools - Pooled Testing

- **116,000 individuals tested**
- **10,092 pool tests complete**
- **Prevalence Rate: 0.27%**

High Schools – Individual Testing

- **18,200 people tested**
- **Prevalence Rate: .59%**

Sharing Testing Experiences - Charles County



- Jason Stoddard, Director of School Safety and Security, Charles County Public Schools
- **Program Name:** Increasing Access to Community to Testing (ICATT) funded by HHS
- **Duration:** June - August 2021
- **Type of testing:** Individual PCR testing

Q&A

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For additional questions, please contact
mdh.k12testing@maryland.gov